

[Vote for Bloat]

I hear that you are interested in politics and elections and stuff like that. Now I dont suppose there has been more fights caused over any other subjects. In fact you just caint hardly find no other subject to have a fight about. Down in Oklahoma they might not go no further than to cuss you out good and proper when they meet you on the streets but when election day rolls around Boy you better come to town a fighting. If you dont somebody else will.

Of course you see fellers down in there that aint got sense enough to sell their vote to the highest bidder but one particular occasion I remember was one election day or I believe it was election eve sort of the day before election and I heard two fellers a talking abotu which side to sell to and one man said Well I sold out to the republican for two dollar. And the other man says Well me I sold out to the democrat. And then there was a little talk about how much they sold out for and one feller said Well I sold out to the republican for two dollar. And hte other man said the democrat paid him two and a quarter and a chew of just pretty fair tobaccer. And maybe you think thats funny or odd but it aint because over here in Brooklyn the other night just before the primary I run onto a couple of old boys a talking and one said WellI didnt do so good this year I only got \$8 out of the republicans — but the second feller was somewhat smarter and he said You know I sold out to both sides, 600 from that democrat and 500 from that Willkie button man and — then one of them said after a little bit — outside of that I aint worked none in a half a year.

Of course I been in New York long enought to notice that most everybody runs around either 19 stories above the ground or a couple or three below and so far since February I aint found out just who's on the ground because I couldnt swear that I've seen it sine I been here — anyhow you see some folks up and some folks down and some folks down underground and when I see all of this stuff it makes me think of how we use to have elections down where I come from — because you see everybody around there was either

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a mining lead or zinc or coal or drilling for oil or something like that and when you're a drilling, I mean when you're a mining for lead or zinc, well they got a big deep shaft and you got to go down in the hole to get what you want and for coal you got to go down in the hole to get what you want and for oil you got to go down in the hole to get what you want and it's the same way up here in New York you got to go in the hole to get what you want and not only lead and zinc and coal to burn or oil to use, you got it worse up here because even if you want a suit of clothes or a undershirt or as big a thing as a twenty coach train well you got to go down in the hole and ain't no telling just when you'll come out either I've caught that subway four times and saw one medium dressed man down in there the other day that swore and be derided he was on the right train. The only way you can catch anything is by going in the hole.

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Anyhow a page is a page unless you saw something on it in which case you are a columnist and you can name your number. Now you might think I'm off of the subject but so are the columnists. You talk about elections man I seen years go by down there in Oklahoma and you talk about fights I seen years go by down there in Okfuskee County when none of us knew for six or eight months just who was elected sheriff or judge because nobody was well enough to count the votes. Some years they wasn't enough votes to count. Other years they counted them three times and all of these things caused fist and gang fights. We tried not to hurt the women. Everybody liked kids down there but a few days before election and several days after we didn't, well us kids just naturally had to keep off of the streets because of the fist fights and gang fights and teams running away with wagons and turning over chicken coops and running through everything and women out chasing from one end of town to the other getting their men folks up off of the streets or out from under some building. It was wild down in there along them rivers and we had plenty of skunk and bob cat and panther but you was a devil of a lot safer out along the river bottoms than you was in town of a election week. That's still the most unsafe part of the year even out in California where they come to pick at peaches, punch for pensions, pray for peanuts,

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or preach for perfume. Or up in the east its the same way. Both sides run on the same ticket and Wall Street just don't care who's elected. They just put out these pretty flags and buttons to show you a good time. The votes are already counted before hand — I mean behind back — so to speak.

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The boys and girls down in Oklahoma make as much of a celebration out of election day as they can. Most of them are still full of pep and vinegar and body politics. Wait a second there's a guitar falling off of the wall and I got to run and catch it. A Catholic family just moved in down below us with three kids and they shake everything out of the other four floors of this old building. There is a lady that's pregnant visits on the first floor and she might of dropped a little something. Yes Texas is interested in politics too but not so much elections. Down there its mainly who can play the best hoedown music. Well its sort of that a way in Oklahoma too and even in California because after W. Lee. O'Daniels got to be governor on a break down fiddle the musicians has sobered up a little and are we getting big ideas. Now I said that they was all a sobering up and maybe I didnt exactly mean that. The other half of them is a drinking more than both sides use to and a practicing up to beat the devil. Yes sir musical elections is what we got down there. And Roosevelt or Willkie one would do dern good to make that stretch of country with a guitar fiddle or something — but Roosevelt has been a fiddling around now all over the 48 states for some long time. Why I've seen judges and representatives and all kinds of congress men get elected down in there just on one good greasy string. And I personally know of one colored boy down close to Seminole that has put three district judges and 2 county sherrifs and 11 members of 4 school boards into office just with a 50-cent mouth harp and it aint what you say in your speech down yonder its just who hires that colored boy to blow them freight train blues and play that Lost Indian and The Fox and the Hounds on that french harp. I feel like I ought to mention in a round about way too that he has kept 17 preachers their jobs down

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through that particular country for the last five years. I guess its about the same all over. Some folks think Im just a joking but this is history. This is what you got to know before you can win a election, music and womens legs — but with music and bathing beauties you can really sack up — look what Hitler's done with naked women. Well you take both and you dont need an office. Senators under 12 years aint suppose to read this. We got a little of both back where I come from. Lets see what was I going to say before I spoke? Oh yes it was elections. The average elections are about as useful as a slop jar without a bottom in it. Pardon me a lady just fell out of the top story and I got to run and snatch her. Down in Baltimore Md., they wont let you buy no liquor on election day and so they sell more than ever on that day. They say they want you to vote sober. What difference does it make, you couldnt vote no wronger. Sometimes I think they ought to try it the other way. If the people was to ever win an election, they'd think they was dead and in heaven, I mean in heaven without a having to die. Who started that stuff about you got to get killed to be happy? Some states charge you \$1.75 to vote they call it poll tax, that takes a weeks groceries and snuff and most folks figure that the democrats aint worth 1.75 and the republicans aint worth that much. What the world needs to do sometime or other is to vote right just once and win just one election and then it would be Vote for Bloat a whole lot different. What we need in this president is somebody that believes in his country. I remember how us kids use to do when the elections really got hot. We might of had some dry weather in the dustbowl but no dry elections. Nobody was dry that week and the candidates run 3 jugs of corn, 2 home made wine and a grass widdow ahead of the rest of us. It got so tough in the streets and so many fist fights up and own the side walks and gang fights in the back alleys that us kids had to climb up the sewer pipes and get up on top of the store buildings. I remember one day when a bunch of us clumb one and I looked into my dads office window and it was open and I clumb in and carried off a half a sack of forty four bullets and a big fight broke out around a big fire they had and I threwed the sack of bullets off in the fire and the went to blowing up and scattered 9 drillers, 8 tool dressers, 7 rough necks, 6 roust abouts, 5 casers, 4 pipe liners, 3 tong bucklers,

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two cement men, and one holiness preacher.

The men down there built up a big black board and drawed off some white lines on it for a score board, you know, and every hour a feller with a wet rag in his hip pocket would come out and mark down in each colum what took place in each precinct and they had a colum for Bill Jones for sherrif and one for Tom Smith and he'd holler through a big horn what he was a writing down and he'd yell, Bill Jones for sherrif precinct 3, 6 votes, Tom Jones 5, fist fights 2, gangfights 1. And they had a colum for fist fights where he would write it up with white chalk and for the first four years I was old enough to climb a building and and look, well as I reccollect, we had more fights in that county than votes. Of course this was in the day when the oil boom was really wheeling and dealing and the Indians was a getting the grease and all of the agents and lawyers had oil on their hair and gas on their stomach and water on the knee cap and money on the brain and was really a skipping through the dew. I was snatched up down in the Creek Indian Nation of what is now Okfuskee County in the town of Okemah. They even took up the rail road down there a while back. There's one certain engineer on that line that blows the worlds lonesomest railroad whistle, they call him old Boomer Swinson and say he's run over 13 people down through there, and every time he comes to a place where he's run over a man why he blows that long lonesome train whistle and he blows it so it makes you shivver in your office chair — and that whistle and the dust and the bankers and crooked politicians has run a lot of folks out of a mighty good stretch of country down in there. And sherifs and deputies and city marshals and cops has done their part. She's a hard hit, hard hittin place, Oklahoma.

Woody Guthrie

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(Magazine section)